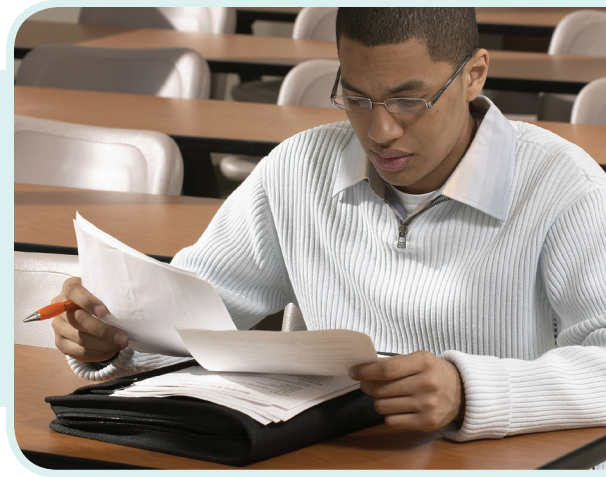


HELP YOUR COLLEGE-AGE KID MAKE HEALTHY DECISIONS



For 18 years, you forced her to eat her veggies and treated her while she was sick. You took him to the doctor and made sure he took his medicine per doctor's orders. You knew if they were getting too much or too little sleep, and knew if stress was a cause for concern.

Now at least one of your children is going away to college. While you can't micromanage from miles away, you can help prepare him or her for possible health issues.

Preparing for school

Before your child leaves for college, add a few health-related items to your to-do list:

- **Immunizations** – Most colleges require proof of immunizations. In addition to the basics like measles shots, students who live in a dorm may need a meningitis vaccine too.
- **Health history** – The college will need it, so take the easy route: use My Health Record in **MyHumana** – your secure Website on **Humana.com**. You and your child can update and print the record from any computer with Internet access.
- **Insurance card** – Make sure your child has a card and knows to keep it handy at all times. Point out important information like copayment amounts, so your child knows what to expect at the doctor's office or pharmacy.
- **In-network providers** – Pick an in-network doctor, urgent care center, and pharmacy in your child's new town. You'll have one less thing to worry about in case something happens – and you'll save money too.
- **Release forms** – Prepare several copies of a signed form or letter giving you access to your child's health information. It's your child's choice whether to grant a blanket permission or to do so on a case-by-case basis. But without it, the doctor, hospital, or campus

clinic can't release health information to you for a dependent 18 or older.

Adjusting to a new environment

Moving can cause health changes – and moving from a parent's house to a dorm is no exception. Some things to think about:

- **Maintenance medications** – Help your child develop a new dosing routine that fits his or her class schedule. Also talk about how and when to order refills.
- **Allergy and asthma triggers** – If your child is sensitive to mold, pollen, and other allergens, it's important to watch for symptoms after moving. If food allergens are a problem, contact the school food-service department for help and advice.
- **Diet and activity changes** – To help your child avoid the "Freshman 15" – the 15 pounds many new college students gain – talk about making healthy choices in the cafeteria and encourage your child to participate in sports, which is a great way to stay in shape and meet people.
- **Stress and time management** – In a 2005 survey, nearly a third of college students said stress caused them to perform poorly in school. Common stressors include time management problems, relationship troubles, and credit card debt. If your child has problems, the school may offer free help, such as counseling services.

(continued on next page)

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Bottom line:

Set your college-bound kid up for a good experience in their new environment. Have a heart-to-heart about making healthy choices away from home.

Additional resources:

- American Academy of Allergy Asthma & Immunology article: "Asthma and the College Student" – www.aaaai.org/members/allied_health/articlesofinterest/asthma_college.stm
- Centers for Disease Control (CDC) fact sheet on Vaccines for Teens – <http://cdc.gov/vaccines/recs/schedules/teen-schedule.htm> (click "printer friendly" on the top-right to make it more readable)
- A site developed by and for women college students about health and safety issues – www.4collegewomen.org

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